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**Introduced by Senator Maldonado**

May 22, 2008

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 118—Relative to Sea Otter Awareness Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 118, as introduced, Maldonado. Sea Otter Awareness Week.

This measure would proclaim the last week of September as Sea Otter Awareness Week in the State of California, and urge all Californians to be aware that the imperiled sea otter is an integral part, and a symbol of, California's coastal nearshore ecosystem and serves as an indicator for the overall health of California's marine ecosystems, and, thus, there is a need to protect both the sea otter and the coastal waters in which it lives.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Sea otters play a critical role in the marine  
2 ecosystem as a keystone species. They are an integral part of  
3 California's world-renowned kelp forests and its coastal economy;  
4 and  
5 WHEREAS, Sea otters prey on kelp-eating sea urchins and other  
6 marine herbivores, promoting healthy kelp forests that, in turn,  
7 support numerous fish species and invertebrates. Without sea otters,  
8 these rich ecosystems collapse; and  
9 WHEREAS, Sea otters serve as a sentinel species of the coastal  
10 nearshore ecosystem. If sea otters are unable to thrive, their plight  
11 signals that there are significant problems with the overall health  
12 of the coastal ecosystem; and

1 WHEREAS, An increased southern sea otter population could  
2 provide one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) in annual  
3 economic benefits to California through tourism and  
4 recreation-related jobs; and

5 WHEREAS, Despite years of effort, the sea otter remains one  
6 of the most critically imperiled Pacific marine mammals; and

7 WHEREAS, The state population of sea otters has declined, or  
8 failed to increase, in eight out of the last 12 years, and scientists  
9 remain concerned about the long-term viability of the species due  
10 to its high disease and mortality rates; and

11 WHEREAS, The fate of the sea otter is linked directly to the  
12 health of our oceans; and

13 WHEREAS, The public should be educated about the need to  
14 protect California's sea otter population and the coastal waters in  
15 which they live; now, therefore, be it

16 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
17 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the last  
18 week of September as Sea Otter Awareness Week in the State of  
19 California, and urges all Californians to be aware that the imperiled  
20 sea otter is an integral part, and a symbol of, California's coastal  
21 nearshore ecosystem and serves as an indicator for the overall  
22 health of California's marine ecosystems, and, thus, there is a need  
23 to protect both the sea otter and the coastal waters in which it lives;  
24 and be it further

25 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
26 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.